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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE NORTH VIETNAMESE CRISIS

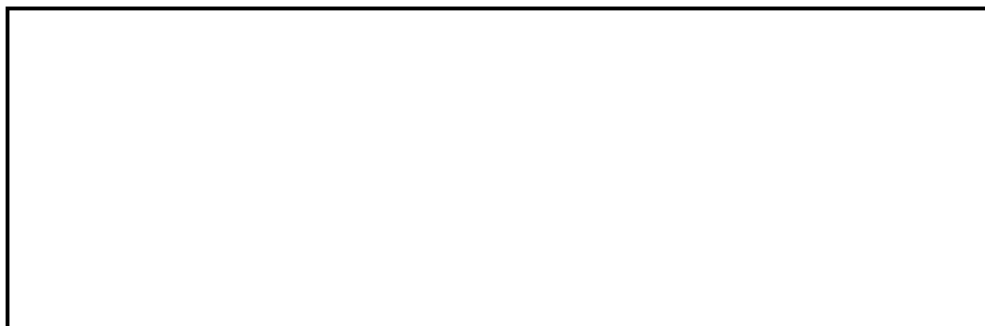
Information as of 1300
8 AUGUST 1964

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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SC No. 10119/64

8 August 1964

C O N T E N T S

I. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

- A. North Vietnamese Military Activity
- B. Chinese Communist Military Activity
- C. Soviet Military Activity
- D. US Deployments

II. OTHER COMMUNIST REACTION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

MEMORANDUM: The North Vietnamese Situation

I. CURRENT SITUATION AS OF 1300, 8 AUGUST 1964

A. North Vietnamese Military Activity

1. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Vietnamese Communists remain in a cautious and defensive posture. Naval forces in the north sea fleet are dispersed, and periodically change their anchorage. Camouflage is being emphasized.

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B. Chinese Communist Military Activity

1. No further information has been received on the reported movement of Chinese Communist troops into North Vietnam on 6 August.

2. No major forward air deployments in the South China area have been reported since

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7 August. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] While there are some indications that augmentation of air strength on Hainan island is planned, typhoon Ida--expected to strike the mainland north of Hainan on 9 August--may force evacuation of the approximately eighty aircraft now stationed there.

3. Further analysis of photography of 7 August shows that a full regiment of Chinese jet fighters could be in place at Phuc Yen airfield near Hanoi. Six aircraft were definitely identified as MIG-15/17s. In addition, there were 22 aircraft unidentified as to type.

4. [REDACTED]

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5. The Chinese navy continues to conduct routine fleet operations, mainly coastal patrols. There is no evidence of ships operating outside normal areas. There is no evidence [REDACTED] that any Chinese submarines are planning, or have commenced any movement southward. Chinese patrol craft operating south of Hainan island on 8 August withdrew to within four miles of shore when US naval units and aircraft appeared in the area.

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C. Soviet Military Activity

No significant Soviet military reaction to the crisis has been reported during the past 24 hours.

D. US Deployments

1. The De Soto patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin has ended.

2. The aircraft, naval, and marine units scheduled to be in position by 8 August have all arrived on station. These include 38 B-57s, 30 F-100s, and 1,800 men of the 3rd Marine Division. All other deployments are proceeding as scheduled.

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II. OTHER COMMUNIST REACTION

A. Peiping has underscored its reluctance to have the UN play any part in dealing with the Indochina crisis. A People's Daily editorial on 8 August declared that the UN is not competent to handle the question and insisted that a solution must be sought through the machinery established by the Geneva agreements. Chinese Communist broadcasts report that "popular indignation" against the US is spreading inside China. Protest meetings have taken place in Shanghai and in the capital of Sinkiang Province.

B. Hanoi has not yet responded to the UN invitation either to send a representative to present the DRV case or to submit its views in writing. On 7 August Hanoi sent protest notes concerning US air strikes to the signatories of the 1954 Geneva accords. The Vietnamese are clearly less than satisfied with the role Moscow has played in the crisis thus far. In a review on 8 August of international support which they have received to date, the Vietnamese failed to give the USSR credit for any aid beyond its condemnation of the US in the Security Council. Communist China, by contrast, was effusively thanked for its "outstanding" help.

C. In his first comment on the crisis, Soviet Premier Khrushchev denounced the US air strikes against North Vietnam and, in an apparent effort to counter Peiping's criticism of the USSR's performance to date, warned that "if the imperialists dare to unleash war upon the socialist countries, the people of the Soviet Union will fulfill their sacred duty and will stand up for their motherland and for other socialist states." Khrushchev's remarks were made in a speech during his current farm-belt tour of the North Caucasus and according to US wire services, were printed in today Izvestiya.

D. Soviet propaganda continues to stress the dangers to world peace if the conflicts in Southeast Asia expand.

E. Soviet representatives have made some effort to probe the facts of the situation and to determine if US policy in the area has changed. On

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6 August, Soviet TASS correspondents in Bonn emphasized to several US journalists that the USSR has no interest in getting involved. The TASS newsmen underscored the importance of determining the precise facts of the 2 August incident. A Soviet Embassy official in East Berlin, speaking "personally" with his US counterpart, took much the same line.

-4-

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